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In the claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for use by a wireless device in a wireless communications environment, the method comprising the step of:

automatically selecting one of a plurality of radio frequency channels for communication with other devices, wherein the selection of a radio frequency channel is performed such that radio frequency interference with other devices is reduced;

prior to utilizing the selected channel for normal communications, communicating the selection of a radio frequency channel to other devices by sending, on the selected channel, a message indicative of an intent to utilize the selected channel.

2. (currently amended) A method for selecting an operating channel by a wireless device comprising the steps of:

scanning a plurality of radio frequency channels during a scan interval;

~~Logic for receiving~~ monitoring each of messages on the plurality of radio frequency channels during the scan interval for indication of utilization of ones of the channels;

maintaining a channel map having an entry for each of the plurality of radio frequency channels, and if one or more messages was received on a channel, the corresponding entry further including a device ID for at least one of the devices that sent a message on the channel;

selecting a channel from the channel map based at least in-part on whether an indication of utilization of the selected channel was detected;

~~transmitting messages~~ on the selected channel during a claim interval, at least one message indicative of an intent to utilize the selected channel;

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monitoring receiving messages on the selected channel during the claim interval for a message from another device indicative of an intent to utilize the selected channel; and
ascertaining whether the wireless device apparatus should commence communications with other devices on the selected channel based upon characteristics of the any messages received on the channel.

3. (original) The method of claim 2 wherein the step of maintaining a channel map further comprises the step of storing a power level for each device ID for each entry in the channel map, and wherein the step of selecting a channel from the channel map selects a channel having either no device ID or a device ID that has the